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ABSTRACT

Folklore and folk arts encompass the body of traditional knowledge learned and artifacts produced outside of formal institutions as a result of participation in folk groups. A great portion of daily life and culture is folk. Folklore and folk arts acquire distinctly local characteristics through the influences of geography, history, or talented individuals within the folk group. This manual invites an exploration of the unique aspects of south Florida folklore and folk arts. The guide is the text for a secondary level, semester length, elective course. Components of the course are units which address the major folk lore genres or categories, and may be used individually to supplement other teacher situations. They may also be adapted for elementary level use. An Introduction to folk arts is given, which includes basic folk arts concepts and definitions. The categories considered are: (1) "Verbal Arts"; (2) "Folk Arts and Crafts"; (3) "Foodways"; (4) "Folk Architecture"; (5) "Folk Music"; (6) "Folk Dance"; and (7) "Occupational Folklife." Each unit includes a brief definition and discussion of the genre under consideration, teaching strategies, and a bibliography. The guide also supplies a vocabulary list, a list of printed and audio-visual resources for the classroom, and a sample informant data sheet. (MM)

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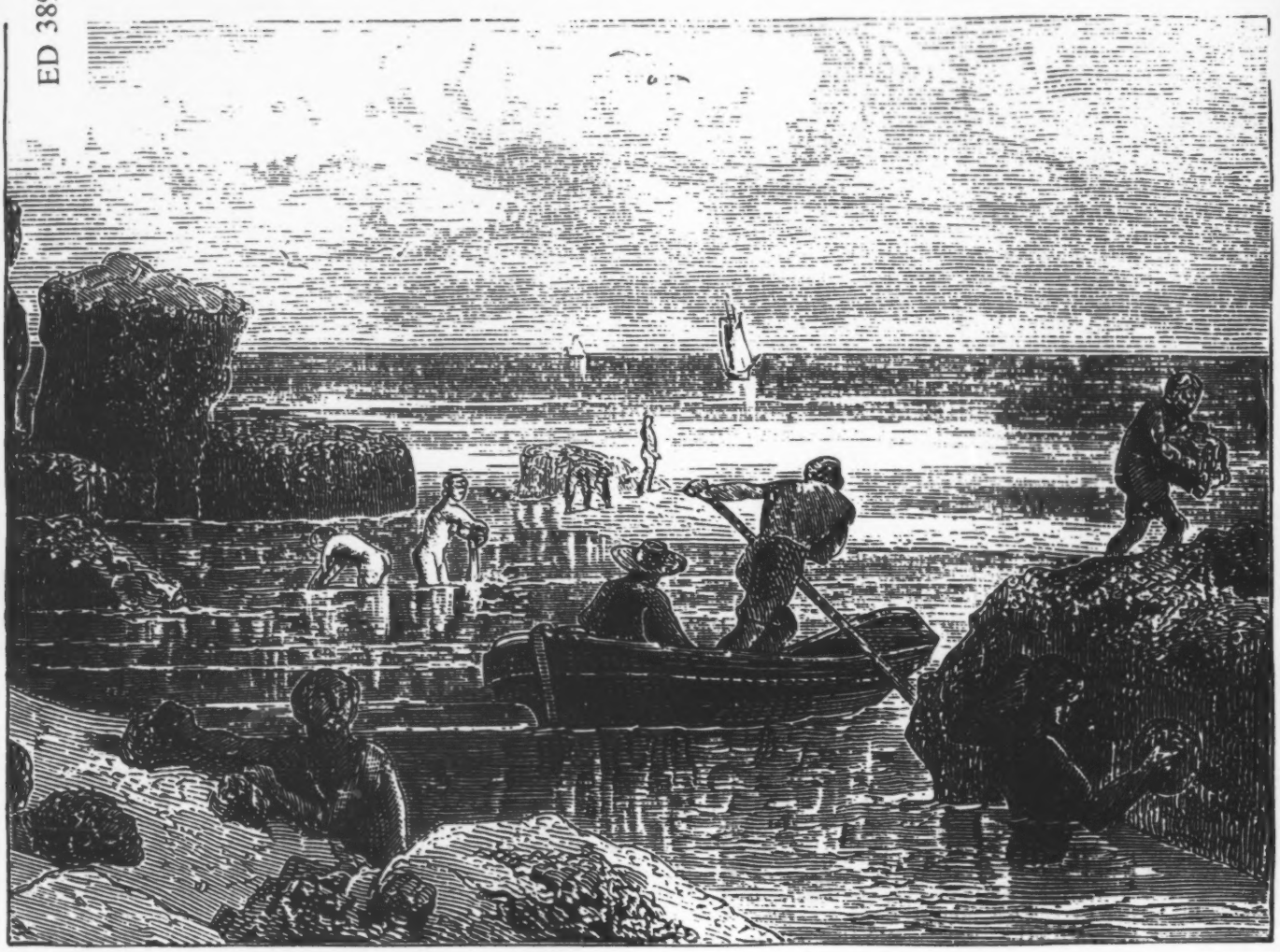

Sponge Fishing, from Harpers 1871

SOUTH FLORIDA FOLK ARTS: A TEACHERS GUIDE

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SOUTH FLORIDA FOLK ARTS: A TEACHER GUIDE

by Dr. Tina Bucuvalas

Miami
Dade County Public Schools/
Historical Museum of Southern Florida
1988

SOUTH FLORIDA FOLK ARTS: A TEACHER GUIDE

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Introduction

Course Explanation

South Florida Folk Arts: A Teacher Guide is the text for a sixteen-week, semester-length elective course on south Florida folk arts. This introductory course has been developed especially for the instructor with little, if any, formal training in the discipline of folklore. It is not intended as an all-inclusive treatment of the subject, but seeks to present the basic concepts through examples that are familiar to south Florida teachers and students.

The components of the course are a series of discrete units that address the major folklore genres, or categories. While each unit is an intrinsic part of the whole, each may also be used individually to supplement other classes or teaching situations. The rationale for arranging materials in this manner is that not all teachers are able to devote an entire term to folk arts. Moreover, division into separate units allows for greater flexibility in planning and implementing the course, as well as increasing the possibililty of integrating folklore materials into pre-existing curricula. For example, the Folk Groups unit might be appropriate for inclusion in a social studies class.

The outline of the course is as follows:

A. Introduction to Folk Arts
    1. Basic folk arts concepts
        a. Definitions
        b. Folk groups

B. Folk Arts of South Florida
    1. Verbal arts
    2. Folk arts and crafts
    3. Foodways
    4. Folk Architecture
    5. Folk Music
    6. Folk Dance
    7. Occupational Folklife

C. Class Collection Project

All units include a brief definition and discussion of the genre under consideration, teaching strategies, and a bibliography. The guide also supplies a vocabulary list, audio-visual resources for the classroom, and a sample informant data sheet. Although this course can be adapted to both elementary

and secondary levels of instruction, the teaching strategies tend to address the secondary level. Therefore, elementary school teachers will probably find it necessary to adapt research projects or discussions to the level of their students.

The time devoted to each unit is up to the teacher. Most units could be covered in a week, but I recommend that units that have particularly rich resources in the community, such as Folk Music or Folk Arts and Crafts, should be extended with visits by several artists. All units in section B, "Folk Arts of South Florida," are meant to be supplemented by visits from local folk artists.

The Use of Folk Arts in the Schools

A folk arts course can be a valuable addition to standard school curricula since it may provide solutions to some problems inherent in current teaching practices. Much school curricula teaches the elite traditions of mainstream American society, such as the history of "important" figures or institutions, written literature, or Western classical music, while ignoring facets of culture that pertain to everyday life, special groups or particular regions. This course balances that orientation with a focus upon American and specifically south Floridian folk traditions.

The study of folk culture has many potential benefits for students. First, it can awaken students' interest through an enhanced awareness of their immediate environment. In order to promote this result, much of the South Florida Folk Arts course concentrates on local folk cultural genres or groups. Second, the attention to local traditions lends legitimacy to cultural groups or elements which may be ignored or undercut by the usual emphasis upon mainstream culture. For students with a strong regional or ethnic background, the study of folklore often stimulates greater participation and higher levels of achievement when they discover that their traditional culture is appreciated rather than rejected. The study of folklore can also correct negative stereotypes through the exploration of actual group values and expressive traditions. In addition, parental and community interest in education is frequently stimulated when children involve their families and neighbors by interviewing them about traditional culture.

The folklore course may also have direct benefits for the teacher. Often instructors are taught by educational institutions to regard the student as a tabula rasa, awaiting inculcation with "correct" knowledge and values. However, the worldview promulgated in the classroom is a highly stylized version of mainstream American culture and usually does not correspond to students' actual home situations or value systems. This is particularly problematic for students from ethnic, lower socioeconomic class, or regional backgrounds who enter the classroom with a strong, non-mainstream orientation. A focus

upon folk traditions may instruct the teacher in students' cultural systems, thus providing the basis for greater understanding of student needs and the development of more effective teaching methods.

Course Objectives

The South Florida Folk Arts course is designed to fulfill a variety of objectives. Some are directly related to mastering the concepts and skills needed for the study of folk culture, while others contribute to the development of general skills or knowledge.

Folkloristic objectives include the development of students':

1. Comprehension of basic concepts such as folk, folklore, folk art, folklife, and tradition;

2. Awareness of the many folklore genres, especially those in local use;

3. Knowledge of folklore theory and methodology;

4. Fieldwork skills such as listening, interviewing, tape-recording, photo documentation, and/or interpersonal relations;

5. Ability to identify folk groups, especially local groups;

6. Ability to distinguish between elite, popular, and folk culture;

7. Comprehension of oral, mimetic, and other transmission processes of folk culture;

8. Knowledge of folklore as a dynamic process that reflects group values and aesthetics;

9. Appreciation of the expressive folk culture of other groups and thus the creation of better relations between students of different cultural backgrounds.

General objectives include the development of students':

1. Sense of identity in relation to family, community, cultural group, area, state, and nation;

2. Better relationships with family and neighbors through greater awareness of their role in transmitting cultural knowledge;

3. Knowledge of local history, geography, immigration patterns, occupational groups, and social organization;

4. Listening, reading, and writing skills;

5. Research and communication skills.

SOUTH FLORIDA FOLK ARTS COURSE

A. Introduction to Folk Arts

Although relatively unknown among laypeople, folklore scholarship has a long history in this country and abroad. After Englishman William Thoms first coined the term "folklore" in 1846, folklore began to emerge as a recognized discipline. There has been increasing sophistication of concepts, theories, and methodologies applied to the study of folklore, so that there is now a significant body of scholarship documenting and analyzing it. Moreover, since the 1950s many folklore departments and courses of study have sprung up in universities around the country. As a result of these academic programs, a growing number of professional folklorists conduct research, publish, teach, and promote folklore through public presentations. Moreover, many national, state, and local cultural agencies have developed on-going public programs in folk arts or folklife.

But why should we direct our attention to folklore? The question itself arises out of some common misconceptions about the nature of folklore. Folklore is not necessarily rural, old, untrue, quaint, disappearing, or primitive. It may be any of those things at one time or another, but it can also be urban, modern, true, or sophisticated. As will be discussed at greater length in the following section on definitions, folklore is traditional knowledge learned outside of formal institutions as a result of participation in folk groups.

No matter who we are or where we live, a great portion of our daily life and culture is folk. Those parts of our lives have often been overlooked by major governmental and cultural institutions, which have tended to focus on elite arts and history. An attention to folk culture corrects this orientation. In particular, an attention to folk arts addresses the aesthetic needs of the bulk of our population, which does not necessarily share an interest in the arts usually supported by major institutions.

Folk arts acquire a distinctly local character through the influences of geography, history, or talented individuals within the folk group. They may range in form and execution from the daily, almost unnoticed aspects of life to the peak artistic expressions that have arisen from a long history of cultural achievement. By studying folk arts, we are able to discern some of the ways in which our neighbors have used their creative genius to enliven our unique south Florida environment.

Basic Concepts

Definitions

Although the terms folklore, folk arts, and folklife are frequently used in casual conversation, most people have not developed a coherent understanding of their meanings. Those who regularly study folk culture (folklorists) have developed relatively standardized terms and concepts which are useful in dealing with the subject. However, when using any of these words, it is important to bear in mind that all are modified by the term "folk," and thus that we are constantly referring to items, ideas, or processes that are shared and molded by a folk group.

Folklore is the body of traditional knowledge that people learn outside of formal institutions as a result of their participation in folk groups. Folklife is the manifestation of traditional knowledge and includes but is not limited to such diverse categories as belief, custom, art, craft, music, foodways, dance, drama, play, occupational or technical skill, architecture, and verbal arts.

The term folk arts has a variety of connotations. Most often, it is used synonymously with folklife to indicate the manifestation of traditional knowledge. In other instances, it is used to refer to those traditional cultural expressions which have a high aesthetic component. In an even more limited sense, folk arts may be used to denote only material folk artifacts or only those artifacts without a practical function. In this course, we will generally use the term folk arts to denote those traditional expressions with a high aesthetic component, whether material, verbal, kinesic, or aural. However, when we specifically discuss material folk culture such as crafts, we will be using the term in a more limited sense.

A folklorist is a person who investigates folk culture. Folk culture is synonymous with folklore. Tradition refers to shared, recurrent, and standardized behavior, skills, or information. Although tradition implies some time depth, it is not limited to survival over generations. Traditional arts are synonymous with folk arts. A genre is a category which can be distinguished from other categories on the basis of form, function, content, and/or style. For example, verbal arts and folk architecture are different genres of folk arts.

Folklore has several characteristics which distinguish it from other types of culture. One of these is the way in which we learn or transmit it. Folklore is transmitted informally, that is, from person to person rather than through schools, books, or other such formal media. This type of informal transmission is responsible for another quality of folklore: it exists in many versions or variants rather than in a fixed form. Finally, folklore is traditional in the sense that it is passed on

repeatedly among the members of a folk group.

Folk culture is sometimes distinguished from other types of culture. Most commonly, there is a distinction made between folk, popular, and elite culture. In contrast to folk culture, popular culture refers to those aspects of culture which are produced for mass consumption, such as TV programs or most commercial audio recordings. Elite culture is often codified or fixed in form, concerned with individual authorship or creativity, and taught by formal organizations and institutions such as schools, universities, or academies.

Folk Groups

The most important determinant of the south Florida experience is the variety of people who have made this region their home. South Floridians have roots in the Americas, Caribbean, Africa, Europe, and Asia; their folk arts reflect this heritage, and their interaction with the environment has embued it with a unique tropical cast. Recent Dade County statistics reveal a rich cultural and racial mix with a population that is 47% non-Latin White, 36% Latin, and 17% Black.

Folklore cannot be dissociated from the context in which it occurs and still be fully comprehensible, and the folk group is a key feature of the folklore context. A folk group consists of any group, usually in face-to-face interaction, that shares a body of lore, skills, or other traditional knowledge. The folk group may be as small as two people who share a joke or as large as a national group that shares certain knowledge or customs. There are many types of folk groups, including but not limited to families, age groups, ethnic groups, occupational groups, religious groups, and regional groups. All people belong to more than one folk group. Therefore, people's actions sometimes reflect the values and belief systems shared with one group, sometimes the patterns of another, and at other times simply personal inclination. For instance, a Cuban American high school student may, in the same day, say the pledge of allegiance in home room, exchange jokes with school friends about the teacher, eat a traditional Cuban dinner, and cruise main street after a movie with his girlfriend. These activities demonstrate that he belongs to several folk groups: a national group (American), a social group (high school students), an ethnic group (Cuban American), and an age group (teenagers).

The family is an excellent starting point for students to learn about traditions and fieldwork skills since they already have an intimate knowledge of group members and their repertoires. Although they may share similar traditions with other families, each family develops some unique folklore that arises from a specific history. Examples of family folklore are stories of immigration, famous relatives, family fortunes or disasters, customs, beliefs, expressions, games, keepsakes, and other traditions. Family photos and heirlooms provide a convenient

means by which the student can elicit explanatory stories from older relatives, or find documentation of important events in family members' lives.

Age groups generate bodies of lore that relate to the experiences of human beings during certain segments of their lives. Children carry a rich variety of folk traditions. Many children's rhymes, jokes, games, types of play, and celebrations are maintained and transmitted over generations. Adolescents participate in age group traditions such as modern horror legends, courtship rituals, initiation rites, joke cycles, or song parodies. Although not often studied as a group, middle-aged people carry a variety of lore. Traditions about pregnancy and childbirth, certain games and sports, and a great deal of occupational lore are generated by this group. Older people relate stories of dramatic events during their lives, such as wars or the Depression. They are increasingly concerned with illness and death, and often develop extensive narrative repertoires based on these topics.

Ethnic groups are composed of individuals united by shared cultural traditions that often originate in foreign lands. As a plural society, many Americans retain ethnic traditions that provide them with a sense of purpose and identity. There are hundreds of ethnic groups in the United States, including but certainly not limited to Cuban Americans, Native Americans, and Blacks. In our country, ethnic traditions have often evolved from the synthesis of foreign, regional, and American cultural patterns. For instance, ethnic foodways must necesarily adapt to American products and cooking technology, and thus acquire somewhat different tastes and textures than Old Country foods. In studying ethnic folklore, students should be sensitive to differences between public and private traditions. Some folk customs are practiced only within the home or group, while others are displayed to the public as group symbols. For example, Greek folk medical practices such as curing with <u>vendusiz</u> cups or evil eye exorcisms are usually confined to the home, whereas dancing and group music are often public events.

Occupational folk groups share traditional knowledge, skills, and social activities based on a common livelihood. Sailors, for instance, share lore transmitted through various genres about ships, marine creatures, ropes, weather, and other phenomena associated with the sea. Urban occupational groups such as factory workers share traditions concerning machines and bosses, as well as jokes, songs, anecdotes, and other lore concerning rituals for new workers, sign language to communicate over long distances, or regular social events such as potlucks during which information about work and workers is exchanged.

Teachers should ensure that students are aware of the existence of two bodies of lore concerning folk groups: the traditions of the group itself, or esoteric lore; and the beliefs held by outsiders about the group, or exoteric lore. Stereotypes are particularly rigid exoteric beliefs about a group, sometimes

based on perceptible characteristics. However, the information presented by stereotypes is inherently limited and oversimplified, and therefore it usually misrepresents the group. It is interesting to note that the same stereotypes are frequently held by different ethnic, regional, or religious groups about each other.

Readings of particular interest on the topic of folk groups are Dundes' "Who are the Folk?" and "Study of Ethnic Slurs," and Jansen's "The Esoteric-Exoteric Factor in Folklore." These articles explore the nature and composition of folk groups, as well as insider and outsider perspectives. Family Folklore provides excellent chapters on various types of family folklore. McDowell's article, "Children's Folklore," includes such topics as collection methodology, repertoire, themes, and the relation of children's folklore to socialization and conceptual processes. Stern's "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity" is perhaps the best basic overview on the subject. Working Americans is an excellent resource for documentation and intellectual perspectives on occupational folklore.

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B. Folk Arts of South Florida

Verbal Arts

Traditional verbal arts cover a wide range of traditional types of speech and literature. These include, but are not limited to short forms such as proverbs, riddles, jokes, dialects, and naming traditions, and longer forms such as folktales, legends, myths, ballads, and folksongs. This range of verbal folk expression is obviously too extensive to investigate here, so I will focus on just two aspects that appear in south Florida: modern urban legends and Jewish folktales.

Modern urban legends occur throughout the country; they are an important part of Anglo-American culture and are told by people in all walks of life. Unlike folktales, legends are narratives that are believed to be true. Modern urban legends are usually realistic stories that people have heard as accounts of the real-life experiences that happened in a nearby place to a friend or a friend of a friend. Yet they must be considered false, in the sense that the same events could not have occurred in so many places to so many people. However, the legends are true in the sense that they are an unselfconscious reflection of the concerns of many individuals in our society, and they usually have a message that can be discerned through analysis. Many of the legends should be familiar to you, such as "The Killer in the Backseat," "The Babysitter and the Killer Upstairs," "The Spider in the Hairdo," "The Alligators in the Sewers of New York," or "Kentucky-fried Rat." Since these legends are entertaining as well as interesting, I highly recommend that they be shared with your classes.

Folktales are one of many types of oral folk literature. In times past, they served to entertain after the day's work had been done and to educate the young about the group's history and values. The combination of today's hectic pace, the fragmentation of families and communities, and the entertainment supplied by the mass media have diminished the importance of folktales in the lives of most Americans. Among the Jewish people, however, storytelling has been maintained as an intrinsic part of their faith.

Folktales have been a vehicle of Judaic religious instruction since the earliest times. The Old Testament contains moral tales, parables, and proverbs based on stories; the Talmud (legal code) records many legends concerning wise men; in postbiblical times, the Midrash (a compilation of legalist commentary and interpretation of the Old Testament) recounted oral traditions, or Hagada, about the wisdom of Abraham, David, Solomon, and other spiritual heroes. Since the sect was founded in eighteenth century Eastern Europe, the Hasidim have fostered the transmission of legends celebrating the miraculous gifts of holy men.

Jewish folktales often share the same plots as tales told in

other cultures, but they differ in the elaboration of details such as time, place, characters, or message. For instance, the tales may reflect important points in the Jewish yearly cycle, such as the Sabbath or holy festivals, or recount the philosophy and adventures of famous rabbis. In most cases, Jewish tales illustrate a moral lesson.

Today it is apparent that written Jewish literature and rabbinical teachings have encouraged rather than destroyed the culture's oral traditions. For instance, many folktales derive from sermons delivered in the synagogue. Storytelling also has a well-established place in their religious or festive activities. Folktales are used in Hebrew schools to educate youngsters about Jewish history and tradition. In addition, certain stories are traditionally told at appointed times, such as during marriage celebrations, Sabbath meals, or mourning. Less serious tales may be told in the informal context of family gatherings.

The readings in Folklore and Folklife cover a variety of verbal arts. Brunvand's Vanishing Hitchhiker and his following books on the subject of modern urban legends are highly recommended. Folktales of Israel covers many Jewish tales, while Hurston's book offers a variety of Afro-American tales collected in Florida in the 1930s.

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Folk Arts and Crafts

Folk arts and crafts are phenomena that exist along a continuum rather than in separate realms. However, in the interests of differentiating between them it seems fair to say that the practical function predominates in folk craft, whereas in folk art the intent is primarily decorative. Still, art and utility are closely interrelated in most folk artifacts, so that crafts

often have considerable artistic merit and arts usually exist within the context of some practical function. This frequently makes it difficult, if not meaningless, to try to separate them. For that reason, I will include a discussion of both art and craft in this section.

Folk arts and crafts are distinguished by a number of characteristics. Like other realms of folk culture, folk art results from the shared traditions of a group rather than an individual artist's idiosyncratic vision. Although folk artists are free to elaborate artifacts within certain accepteed parameters, the most important characteristics of folk art are the continuation of traditional forms or styles and the expression of a group aesthetic. Folk arts and crafts are also characterized by informal transmission of forms or processes from person to person.

Many folk arts and crafts flourish among south Florida's heterogeneous population, but I have room here to use only two as examples. Haitian culture has generated myriad art forms that express a synthesis of African and European elements in the Caribbean context. The fanal, or Christmas lantern, is a folk art that is currently experiencing a revival among Haitians in Miami thanks to an annual contest sponsored by the Haitian American Community Association of Dade County. The Haitian people cut cardboard in intricate patterns to create churches, houses, stars, or birds. They glue tissue paper in brilliant jewel colors inside the structure, then insert a candle through a hole in the bottom of the fanal. At night, the lanterns are placed in windows, so that passersby may glimpse the beautiful, stained-glass effect produced by the fanal.

South Florida's Everglades encompasses millions of acres of wetlands. The people who settled in the Glades developed unique folk crafts to find and capture the fish and game in the wilderness. The glades skiff (also called a pole boat) is a long, narrow canoe-like boat that was commonly used through the early twentieth century. Traditional skiffs are about one foot high, up to 16 feet long, but only about two feet wide in the mid-section. They are slightly tapered and lift slightly in the stern so as to reduce drag in the shallow water. The skiff's flat bottom and long, narrow shape enable it to glide long distances when the navigator stands in the center and pushes it along with a pole.

The few south Florida residents who still make the skiffs now use different materials than in the past. Formerly, cypress was preferred because of its moisture-resistent qualities. In the last 50 years, cypress has become increasingly rare and skiffs are now constructed of plywood, redwood, or fiberglass.

The readings for this section include some basic information about folk arts. Teske's article is particularly good in defining the parameters of folk art. Glassie's essay discusses the history of folk art studies and defines some characteristics

of folk art and craft. The essay by Roberts is useful as a descriptive catalog of many types of folk crafts. Vlach's book is both interesting and useful since it describes a variety of folk arts and crafts, some of which may be found among south Florida Blacks. Jones' book is an in-depth study of a folk craftsperson and his art form.

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Foodways

Foodways includes the production, distribution, selection, and preparation of foodstuffs and the social beliefs, customs, and aesthetics surrounding food consumption. Since most food habits are learned and take place outside of formal institutionalized structures, foodways are usually complex folk cultural phenomena that involve a variety of interrelated beliefs and performances.

Unfortunately, foodways have often been reduced to very simplified concepts through representation in popular media. Instructors should stress that research and analysis of this topic must consist of more than the mechanical repetition of recipes. Traditional recipes represent a synthesis of historical circumstances and cultural forms that have been adapted to specific ecological, economic, social, and personal systems. For example, southern Afro-American foods include but are not limited to foodstuffs derived from African sources such as okra, black-eyed peas, and peanuts; foods such as chitlins (chitterlings) that were made available to Blacks during the slavery era; wild greens and other foods that are indigenous to the South; as well as foods and foodstuffs currently in national circulation. Research into any aspect of this foodways complex must take into account a substantial body of information on culture, history, and environment in addition to local social structure, individual food repertoires, and personal food preferences.

Folklorists approach traditional foodways from a variety of

perspectives, most of which are concerned with continuity of traditions within groups. One important research direction is based on the premise that food often serves as both an esoteriac and exoteric symbol of group identity. This function appears on the national level (apple pie, hamburgers), as well as among regional (barbecue, grits) and ethnic (tamales, baklava) groups. In this vein, scholars investigate the way food as group symbol changes, continues, or is manipulated in different situations. Another important focus is upon the social dynamics and role of food within a particular food event. Most people eat within social groups and therefore follow prescribed roles for food production, selection, preparation, manner, and time of consumption. Thus, foodways are closely associated with social identity and responsibilities. There are many kinds of food events, and each may follow different structural principles and encode different social mesages. Everyday foodways differ from holiday foodways in menu, foods, and social dynamics such as group composition, roles, types of acceptable interactions, and reasons for the event.

There are many ways to assess regional, local, or small group foodways. We are constantly bombarded with information on food traditions. Newspaper advertisements for local grocery specials indicate types of food most commonly purchased. Church or club food events are excellent means of determining the types of favored foods as well as providing the researcher with opportunities to sample them. Churches, workplaces, and other small organizations often assemble booklets of members' most popular recipes and these may delineate favored local foods. Personal food histories and repertoires can be determined by an individual's recipe file. The home is, of course, the most immediate and accessible source from which the individual receives information on local small group food customs, beliefs, and aesthetics.

The preparation and function of traditional foods is an important part of the folklife of any ethnic group. Through this fundamental aspect of life, group members retain strong ties to their folk heritage. Hispanics have transported many foods and food events to Miami, thereby establishing an unmistakable Latin ambience in many sections of the city.

The predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods in Miami are dotted with open-air fruit and vegetable stands. These businesses mirror the markets of Latin America and the Caribbean where people shop daily for fresh produce. Tropical fruits and vegetables such as mamey, mangoes, guayabana, malanga, yucca, plantains, and calabasas are available. In addition, small local grocery stores stock staples such as black beans, rice, and Cuban coffee.

During hot afternoons, street vendors ply their wares from brightly painted hand- or bicycle-driven carts, the backs of trucks, or small stationary stands. Their products are those common throughout Latin America and the Caribbean: peeled

oranges, pineapples, or melons; granizados, or snowcones, with exotic flavors such as tamarind, coconut, and mamey; churros, or long, crisp fried dough strips dipped in sugar; traditional pumpkin or coconut candies; and roasted peanuts in paper sacks. Some of these itinerant vendors announce their presence with traditional cries.

Foodways have been relatively ignored in folklore scholarship until recent years. Yoder's article surveys American regional foodways and scholarship on the topic to 1971. Camp reviews both general and folkloristic scholarship and provides an excellent bibliography on the subject. Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States contains numerous fine theoretical essays and case studies of ethnic and regional foodways. The issue of Western Folklore contains many worthy articles, especially Ireland's appraisal of the compiled cookbook. Among the best descriptiuon of American regional and popular foodways is Trillin's American Fried. Hot Peppers, by journalist Schweid, is a very readable study of the foodways, history, and culture that surrounds the use of peppers in south Louisiana. Finally, Zobel examines barbecue traditions.

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Folk Architecture

In folk architecture, there are no blueprints or prefabricated buildings; instead, the builder relies upon traditional styles and techniques that are part of his cultural heritage. Folk architecture addresses the specific needs of an environment

through the use of available resources and application of the builders' traditional knowledge. The study of folk architecture is concerned with all the traditional aspects of building, such as the choice of sites and placement of buildings on sites; the materials, tools, and techniques of building; the size, shapes, and floorplans of buildings; and the types of stuctures, such as dwellings, barns, and outbuildings.

Although there is a great deal of influence between them, folk architecture can be distinguished from both elite and popular architecture. Elite architecture is designed by academically trained architects, and is usually reserved for major public and commercial buildings, or expensive homes. Popular architecture is largely a product of the twentieth century, and includes mass-produced buildings as well as plans which are distributed by trade and government agencies. In the past, folk architecture was the dominant type; today traditional materials and techniques are most commonly found in nonurban, utilitarian outbuildings such as barns, sheds, smokehouses, etc.

There are several types of folk architecture that can be seen in south Florida. The chickee used by the Seminole and Miccosukee Indians is a traditional structure unique to Florida. The chickee was developed in the nineteenth century, when the Seminole Wars and the migration to south Florida made it impractical for the Indians to build more permanent dwellings. Families traditionally built several chickees in a cluster, with each intended for a different purpose--sleeping, dining, cooking, or working.

The basic chickee design is rectangular. Four posts set into the ground support a rafter system that is covered with palm thatch. Many chickee roofs have an overhang on three sides that increases the covered area. The chickee is usually open-sided, allowing for maximum exposure to cooling breezes, but in some instances may be enclosed to create a more protected space. The chickee is constructed of local materials, cypress for posts and rafters and cabbage palm fronds for thatch.

The Miami area attracted substantial immigration from the Bahamas in late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. These immigrants added a special character to the area and were particularly noted for their building skills. The early Bahamian settlers constructed houses modeled on those of the Bahamas and Key West. The buildings were elevated off the ground on stone piers or wooden posts to allow air circulation and prevent wood rot. They had wooden balloon frames, low gabled roofs, exterior staircases, louvered door and window shutters, and were constructed of local materials such as oolitic limestone or pine. These features enabled the structures to withstand the area's violent tropical storms. The houses were also designed with two-story porches equipped with balustrades across the front or around two sides. The porches shielded the house from the direct rays of the burning sun.

The shotgun house is a distinctive structure built by members of south Florida's Black community in the early twentieth century. This house type originated in West Africa and is common throughout the Caribbean and the American South. Shotgun houses are wooden frame structures one room wide and three rooms deep, with doors at the gable ends. Their name derives from the saying that you could fire a shotgun through the front door and the bullet would go out the back door without touching any other part of the building.

Glassie's book is a highly recommended study of traditional buildings in the eastern U.S. Roberts' article on folk architecture offers some basic comments on folk architeoture. The studies by Loomis, Vlach, and Dade County have pertinent information to offer about local architectural traditions.

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Traditional Music and Song

Folk music in south Florida presents us with a diversity of musical traditions that flourish side by side, often influencing and enriching each other. Folk music is generally defined as music that is aurally (by ear) transmitted in a small group situation, whether originally written or anonymously composed. Folk music is often part of a regional or subcultural repertoire and appears with variations in melody and verses. True folk music performers usually learn their repertoire from family and neighbors in informal situations. Although it may be derived from folk music sources, popular music is intended primarily as a commercial product for a mass audience. Elite music includes art or classical music traditions. Because of the tremendous overlap between folk, elite, and popular music, the student must be particularly sensitive to the performance context, i.e., the individual performer, audience, and function of the music, as well as the tunes and verses, in order to determine whether it is a folk music tradition.

In south Florida, folk music runs the gamut from the twangy sounds of bluegrass to the mournful tone of the blues to the sensuous rhythms of salsa. Bluegrass, derived from southern mountain, string-band, and other country music sources, has a strong following in this area. Although many believe bluegrass to be an old-time style, it did not take shape until the mid-1940s and has continued to be a dynamic and evolving musical form. Bluegrass is characterized by the use of acoustic instruments, improvisatory style, virtuoso playing, high-lonesome singing, and down-to-earth songs. Bluegrass bands often include guitars, banjos, mandolins, fiddles, and sometimes dobro and accordion. Many Dade County residents originally came from the south or midwest where bluegrass music was born, and they now host monthly bluegrass festivals and special musical events.

Music has a central place in West African culture, so when Africans were transported to the New World they brought with them extensive repertoires of songs, dances, compositional techniques, instrument building, and poetry. In the following centuries, many of these forms mixed with Anglo-American elements to produce distinctive new genres.

One example of Black music, gospel, developed out of the lives and needs of rural southern Blacks who were transplanted to northern cities. Gospel mixes Anglo-American melodies with African-derived patterns of rhythm, call-and-response techniques by singers, vocal technique, and improvisation. Unlike spirituals, gospel may be accompanied by a variety of instruments, especially the piano or organ. The basic form of gospel is a leader and a chorus, with the driving beat supported by the forceful voices singing emotionally and harmoniously. Gospel singing has derived its aesthetics from two basic sources: the rhetorical style of the black preacher and the collective improvisations of black church congregations. The gospel singer uses much of the same rhetoric, folk expressions, bodily movement, cadence, tonal

range, and timbre of the black preacher, and the church audience typically responds with enthusiastic vocals and movements. Overall, gospel makes a profound statement about Black artistic forms and a philosophy that emphasizes hope.

The influx of peoples from the Caribbean and Latin America has made their music a dominant force in south Florida's musical culture. These Latin and Caribbean musical styles originated from the varying blends of Spanish, African, and Native American music that have occurred over the last four centuries. The types of music featured in south Florida's Caribbean and Latin American clubs, radio, restaurants, religious events, community festivals, and family gatherings include Jamaican reggae, Puerto Rican plena, salsa, and jibaro, Cuban guaguanco and charanga, Haitian compa, Trinidadian calypso and soca, Mexican musica norteña and mariachi. Music is an important ingredient in the lives of members of these communities. It serves as a buffer to a strange environment, a source of entertainment, a reason to socialize, a part of religious observances, and a symbol of cultural identity.

Nettl's book provides a brief overview of American folk music. Malone delineates the roots and current state of country music, while Smith scrutinizes Afro-American musical styles. Lindahl's book provides both a cogent definition of folk music types as well as ways in which beginning students can approach the collection and documentation of folk music. The documentary film, "Say Amen Somebody," is both extremely entertaining and instructive about the history of gospel music.

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Folk Dance

Folk dance shares features with many other folklore genres: it is composed of repetitive actions, is anonymous, demonstrates group affiliation, and is learned through informal means. American folk dance can be found in many forms and places: folk dances preserved among ethnic enclaves; regional forms such as clogging and square dancing; religious dances such as those performed by Santeria practitioners; and the contemporary dances of young people. Folk dance events function primarily as a means of generating positive feelings and social cohesion among the folk group. Such events occur on many occasions, such as at parties, social clubs, or celebrations.

Folk dance can often be found when members of ethnic groups get together for celebrations. For instance, Greek traditional dancing occurs in many contexts, but especially at church-centered events such as weddings. Miamians perform many different dances, such as the kalamatiano, sirto, or tsamiko, which come from different regions in Greece. Musicians traditionally follow the lead dancer in such a way that their playing accents his or her movements. In the curved line dances, it is the lead dancer's prerogative to improvise on the basic steps with flips, whirls on the heel, and slaps to the shoe. Ideally, the dancer becomes so absorbed in the music that kefi, a state of high emotion, inspires him to dance without premeditation. A handkerchief allows the second dancer to aid the leader in improvisations. The third dancer keeps to the regular steps, thereby providing a model for the rest of the line. Finally, the last dancer places the left hand in the small of the back and ensures that the dancers maintain the curve by always moving slightly backwards.

Folk dance most commonly occurs at dance clubs or events such as high school dances. Most of the current dances done by young non-professional dancers can be considered as folk dance because the dances are learned by observation and experimentation. Moreover, they may be danced to popular, non-folk music, but the dances themselves are usually anonymous and can be adapted to many songs. In this case, the folk group within which these dances are transmitted is an age group composed of teenagers and young adults. Dances done to rock, soul, or salsa musical numbers are generally a synthesis of European and African dance elements.

Despite the healthy condition of folk dance in this country, there has been little scholarship to date on the topic. Much of what has been written is purely descriptive and has ignored important social and historical dynamics that have molded dance and dance events. Joanne Wheeler Kealiinohomoku provides one of

the few surveys of folk dance traditions and scholarship. In the pioneering work, Anthropology of Dance, Royce focuses on dance as an important form which reflects and communicates cultural messages.

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Occupational Folklife

South Florida is rich in traditional skills and occupations rooted in the natural environment. They range from cowboying in Davie to boatbuilding in Miami, frogging in the Everglades, and farming in Homestead. All such occupations include techniques, gestures, narratives, songs, beliefs and/or customs shared by workers during their daily activities. People who engage in these traditional occupations sometimes attain such a high level of competence in the execution of a process or in the form and decoration of a product that they are truly artists.

In the past, many aspects of traditional occupations have been studied apart from the occupation itself. For instance, early folklorists sometimes collected songs by cowboys, but did not document the techniques used by cowboys in their daily work. Today, folklorists find that such songs and other traditional genres are more meaningful when studied in conjunction with other aspects of the occupation. The following brief descriptions of traditional south Florida occupations should give you some idea of how the subject is studied.

The inland and coastal waters of south Florida teem with tropical aquatic life, so Floridians have developed many skills and occupations in order to reap the rich marine harvest. For instance, Florida's coastal waters are the only habitat in the United States where sponges grow. Sponge gathering and processing is not new to the Miami area: by the 1890s, hundreds of sponge boats operated by Americans, Conchs, and Bahamians were active from Miami south through the Keys. In the early twentieth century, Key West competed with Tarpon Springs for the greater share of the sponge market. With the sponge blight from 1938 to 1952, however, sponging throughout Florida diminished considerably. In the early 1960s, Miami's sponge industry was revitalized, and today Miami is the commercial sponge center of

Florida.

Sponges are collected by one of two methods. In shallow waters fishermen hook sponges with a four-pronged rake attached to a pole measuring up to 40 feet in length. In deeper waters, divers using an airhose and diving suit cut the sponges from the beds. After they harvest the sponges, the fishermen dump them into crawls, or wooden enclosures at the water's edge. Two or three days later, they beat the sponges with a piece of wood in order to remove the black outer skins, then dry them so the sponges will keep until sold to the processor.

At the sponge warehouse the sponges are dampened, then cut into sizes between five and ten inches in diameter. Next, the sponges are trimmed to a round, even shape, sorted into one of five grades, and dried in the sun. Sponges meant for cosmetic or decorative purposes are cleaned chemically to lighten their natural orange-tan color. Finally, the sponges are counted into lots, stuffed into burlap sacks, and pressed into bails for shipping.

Handrolled Cuban cigars are world-renowned for their excellence. With the U.S. embargo on Cuban products, many small cigar-rolling businesses opened in Miami. Most of those who own or work in these operations learned the trade in Cuba, and some come from families that have made cigars for generation. Techniques and methods remain largely the same, with a few exceptions. Miami cigars are not made exclusively of Cuban tobacco and some cigar sizes have been altered to satisfy the tastes of an American clientele.

In the cigar making establishment, each worker sits at a table equipped with an array of tools necessary to the craft: blade, press, cutter, fixative, and rolling board. From bags containing different varieties of dampened tobacco leaves, the cigarmaker selects a blend of heavy and light tobaccos from the U. S., Central America, the Caribbean, and Africa--each blend suited to a particular type of cigar. The cigarmaker pulls the hard spine from the leaves, cuts the leaves to the appropriate size, and rolls them firmly into shape. Next, the cigar is put into a wooden mold and pressed for forty minutes to give it a consistent size and shape. When the cigars are removed from the mold, the cigarmaker carefully rolls a wrapper, or outer leaf, of superior tobacco around the cigar. A small curved metal blade is used to trim the ends. Finally, the finished cigars are aged in a cool, humidified room which improves flavor and ensures freshness.

The volume edited by Byington includes several essays on different aspects of occupational folklife. It is highly recommended as an introduction and overview of this folklore genre. Mitchell's essay also provides an overview of studies devoted to one category of traditional occupations. Green's book is specifically devoted to mining traditions, and Shubow's work discusses a Floridian traditional occupation.

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C. Class Collection Project

Since folklore is informally transmitted, only a small portion has been captured in books, recordings, films, and photographs. Thus, research into folk culture involves interviewing people and documenting folk ideas, artifacts, and processes--or fieldwork. This is not to suggest that library or archival research is unnecessary; those aspects of folk culture which have already been documented often need further evaluation and interpretation. However, in order to understand folk culture, it is preferable to observe it within a natural context and to discuss the dynamics, meaning, and functions of folk culture with the people who share it. In this way, fieldwork extends learning to embrace the world outside the classroom.

Students of folklore must acquire basic skills of inquiry and documentation. Collection or fieldwork projects not only provide students the opportunities for developing these skills, they also can be used by teachers as a measure of students' level of comprehension. The selection of collection topics often reveals whether students understand basic folklore concepts. For this reason, we recommend that students submit a brief fieldwork project proposal to the instructor prior to undertaking research. In addition to the development of research skills, fieldwork provides opportunities for emotionally and intellectually enriching experiences. Students' increased awareness of the significance of family and community traditions may lead to a lasting appreciation of their importance.

The presentation of materials collected during class projects is an important component of any folklore unit. The method and format chosen to present folklore materials will necessarily vary according to genres studied. On the most basic level, students

may compile a notebook of folklore materials, listing genres collected; names, addresses, and bibliographical information on each informant; date, time, and place of interview; and of course the items themselves. There should also be an analysis of the materials collected, i.e., conclusions about the meaning of an item within the cultural context in which it was collected. Photographs of artists and objects, or audio cassette recordings of musical groups or events might also be included as documentation.

The readings recommended for this unit cover basic fieldwork theory and methodology as well as specific areas of investigation. The American Folklife Center's booklet, Folklife and Fieldwork, furnishes a succint overview of major fieldwork concerns and strategies. It also contains sample data sheets for interviews and tape logs, and suggests ways in which to present collected materials. I recommend that every instructor order one of these free booklets for each class member. Lindahl's Basic Guide to Fieldwork for the Beginning Student was designed specifically to assist students in formulating successful collection projects. Ives' book is a well-balanced discussion of interviewing methodology and technology. Roberts' article contains many excellent suggestions for documentation of material folk culture, especially architecture.

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Vocabulary

Artifact--anything made or altered by humankind; a cultural expression in physical form.

Aural--through hearing.

Context--the physical, social, cultural, and individual variables that influence and lend meaning to the folk expression.

Custom--verbal and non-verbal repetitive behavior that pertains to a cultural tradition.

Elite--formal, institutionalized processes, structures, or products.

Ethnic group--a group that believes itself or is believed to share certain basic traits such as common history, race, language, religion, beliefs, or customs.

Fieldwork--the systematic observation, collection, documentation, and analysis of data from folk groups.

Folk--a group of two or more individuals, usually in face-to-face interaction, that share traditional knowledge and behavior.

Folk art--(1) the manifestation of traditional knowledge; (2) a cover term for traditional expressions with a high aesthetic component; (3) material folk culture; (4) traditional artifacts with a function that is primarily decorative.

Folklife--the manifestation of traditional knowledge, or folklore.

Folklore--(1) the body of traditional knowledge that people learn outside of formal institutions as a result of their participation in folk groups; (2) a designation for the field of study of folk culture.

Folklorist--a person trained in folklore theory and methodology, who investigates folk culture.

Folkloristics--a designation for the field of study of folk culture.

Folk music--music that is transmitted aurally and is a part of the traditional culture of a folk group.

Folktale--inclusive term that refers to many types of longer traditional narratives, such as fairytales, animal tales, fables, etc.

Foodways--the complex of production, distribution, selection, and preparation processes and the social beliefs, customs, and aesthetics that surround food consumption.

Function--the purpose or role of an item or event.

Genre--a category that may be distinguished from other categories

on the basis of form, function, content, and style. Examples are riddles, ballads, folk architecture.

Legend--a prose narrative presumed to be true or believable; legends usually refer to a specific time and place, but may vary in details within different contexts.

Material culture--the physical expression of folk culture and the knowledge of associated techniques and context. Includes but is not limited to folk art, craft, foodways, architecture.

Oral literature--oral traditions that express folk culture, such as ballads, songs, folk speech, riddles, proverbs, jokes, folktales, legends, myths.

Popular--distributed through the media and meant for mass consumption.

Repertoire--all items of folklore known or performed by a an individual or group.

Rite of passage--the ceremonies that usher an individual into a new status or phase of life.

Tradition--shared, recurrent, and standardized behavior, skills, or knowledge.

Traditional arts--folk arts

General Folklore Reference Materials

Books and Indices

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Audio-Visual Materials

The following programs in the Florida Folklife Slide/tape Series are available free of charge to public schools, libraries, and service organizations in Florida. Scripts, slide lists, and a teacher's guide are included with each 15-minute program. For ordering information contact:

Florida Folklife Program
Florida Department of State
PO Box 265
White Springs, FL 32096
(904) 397-2192

"Bethlehem Sacred Harp Sing." Slide/tape program. White Springs: Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs.

"Drop On Down in Florida: Recent Field Recordings of Afro-American Traditional Music." Record album. White Springs, FL: Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs.

"Fernandina Beach: Maritime Traditions of a Coastal Community." Slide/tape program. White Springs, FL: Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs.

"Florida Folklife." Slide/tape program. White Springs, FL: Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs.

"It'll Be Gone When I'm Gone: Lucreaty Clark, White Oak Basket Maker." Slide/tape program. White Springs, FL: Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs.

"It's Our Way - Seminole Designs (Patchwork)." Slide/tape program. White Springs, FL: Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs.

"Little Havana: Folklife in Miami." Slide/tape program. White Springs, FL: Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs.

"Seminole Basketry Traditions -- Sweetgrass and Palmetto." Slide/tape program. White Springs: Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs.

"Seminole Dollmaking--A Traditional Craft." Slide/tape program. White Springs, FL: Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs.

Sample Collection Data Sheet

Date_____

Collector_____ Phone_____

Address_____

Time & Place of Interview_____

Informant's Name_____ Phone_____

Address_____

Date & Place of Birth_____ Sex_____

Ethnic Heritage_____Languages_____

Circumstances of Immigration_____

Occupation(s)_____

Religion_____Marital Status_____

Relation of Informant to Collector_____

Education, Apprenticeships, or Training in Folk Art_____

_____

_____

Traditional Genres in Informant's Repertoire_____

_____

_____

Photos taken or tapes recorded?_____

Other Information: